

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 026808
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 EB-08 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 AGRE-00 SP-02 /033 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:RMARCUS:LAR
APPROVED BY AF/C:LDJUNIOR
AFR/CAWA:JWEDBERG
-----120440 020343Z /65
R 011925Z PEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, CM

SUBJECT: BINDZI ON AID

1. AF/C OFFICERS MET WITH AMBASSADOR BINDZI FOR TOUR
D'HORIZON, JAN. 26. SUBSTANCE OF DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON
LEVEL AND NATURE OF U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO CAMEROON.

2. BINDZI BEGAN BY STATING THAT HE HAD MORE FREQUENT
CONTACT WITH IBRD OFFICIALS THAN WITH AID, REFLECTING
THE RELATIVELY SMALL U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO CAMEROON'S
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. BINDZI TERMED U.S. BILATERAL ASSIS-
TANCE AS QUOTE INSIGNIFICANT UNQUOTE OPTING TO IGNORE THE
SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN OUR AID LEVELS IN THE PAST FEW
YEARS. HE DISMISSED THE U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO CAMEROON
VIA IBRD AND OTHER IFIS WITH A WAVE OF THE HAND. ACCORDING
TO BINDZI, U.S. IFI PARTICIPATION MAKES NO IMPRESSION ON
CAMEROONIANS.

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3. BINDZI SEES CURRENT U.S. AID AS PERIPHERAL TO
CAMEROON'S PRIMARY NEEDS. HE DISAPPROVES OF CURRENT U.S.
AID POLICY IN WHICH BHN GIVEN PRIORITY. BINDZI STRESSED
THE ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AS THE KEY TO A
NATION'S ECONOMIC GROWTH, CITING AS AN EXAMPLE, THE IM-
PORTANCE OF CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSPORTATION ROUTES IN EARLY

U.S. HISTORY. "IN ORDER TO HELP THE RURAL POOR, ONE MUST BE ABLE TO GET TO THEM FIRST."

4. FURTHERMORE, BINDZI THOUGHT OUR BILATERAL AID PROGRAMS HAVE TOO LOW A PROFILE. U.S., HE MENTIONED, SHOULD PROVIDE HIGHLY VISIBLE ASSISTANCE PROJECTS AS HAVE THE EUROPEANS, RUSSIANS AND CHINESE. PROJECTS THAT HAVE BOLD "MADE IN USA" LABEL WOULD BE BEST APPRECIATED BY CAMEROONIANS.

5. BINDZI SINGLED OUT THE MANDARA MOUNTAINS WATER RESOURCES PROJECT FOR SPECIAL CRITICISM. STRESSING THAT IT WAS HIS OPINION, AND NOT NECESSARILY THAT OF THE GURC, HE SAID THAT THE PROJECT WAS POORLY CONCEIVED BECAUSE IT WOULD PERPETUATE A CROWDED RURAL POPULATION ON ARID, NON-FERTILE LAND. BINDZI WOULD PREFER A PROJECT THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE MIGRATION FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE MORE FERTILE PLAINS BELOW WHERE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION COULD BE INCREASED.

6. IN CLOSING, BINDZI URGED THE U.S. TO DEVELOP A MAJOR "ECONOMIC PRESENCE" IN CAMEROON THAT WOULD HELP THE COUNTRY RESIST "EASTERN POWERS."

7. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR BINDZI'S PITCH IS, OF COURSE, HIS FAMILIAR THEME. WHAT WAS NEW, HOWEVER, WAS HIS NEAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VEHEMENCE, EVEN TO THE POINT OF SEEMING TO DIFFER WITH HIS GOVERNMENT, E.G., IN REGARD TO THE MANDARA MOUNTAINS PROJECT. HE MENTIONED THAT HE HAD TWICE BEEN A MINISTER IN THE GURC AND THAT HE WAS CONVINCED HE KNEW WHERE DEVELOPMENTAL PRIORITIES SHOULD LIE. ALTHOUGH HE PRESSED THE INFRASTRUCTURAL THEME, WE BELIEVE WE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN GETTING ACROSS TO HIM THAT NO NEW MAJOR UNDERTAKINGS OF THAT SORT ARE IN THE CARDS FOR THE CAMEROON. WE HAD THE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT HE FEELS HE HAS A CAREER STAKE IN PRODUCING A MAJOR, VISIBLE, MADE-IN-THE-U.S. PROJECT IN THE CAMEROON WITH WHICH HIS NAME WOULD BE PROMINENTLY ASSOCIATED. VANCE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Type: TE
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